

Takada! Kudo! Jericho! Allbright! KAORU! Tanaka! Ooya! Waltman! and other stuff I saw this week!

Howdy!

Welcome to Death Valley Driver Video Review #6!

The lovely wife is visiting her parents in Carolina so I got the whole house to myself! No Lifetime Movies! No quilting shows! Just wall to wall wrestling! I HAVE NO LIFE! HEY! Lives are for squares, and I'm waxing and milking all you squares...

- To hell with Takada vs Misawa, I wanna see a rematch of the Gary Allbright/Takada match from 1994 I saw on tape this morning (Tim went to ECW in Philly last night so I ain't thanking him! You suck! A jealous Dean gets a grip...). Allbright looked awkward during obligatory exchanging mutual knee-bar section of that is a staple of all shootstyle matches but his suplexes were near perfect and he sold Takada's knees to the stomach like a freakin champ. The best part was that I got to mark out to a full nelson for the first time in a while. In shootstyle, a Full Nelson is as cool as a Skywtwister Press is in pro style, because you know in a pseudo-real wrestling match that a Full Nelson by Gary Allbright would choke you out immediately, and the second time he slapped it on Takada, it was like being a kid again and seeing Ric Flair put the figure four on BlackJack Mulligan. I want to see a rematch where Takada takes him to the mat and doesn't get by on kicking him all to hell. Allbright, by the time it was over, looked like he could wrestle circles around Takada (which I guess he could) and Takada looked like he didn't have the sophistication to mat wrestle with him credibly (which I know he could). UWF! can be the best worked wrestling in the world when the right guys are in and I wonder why Vader and Allbright would ever leave a style so suited for them so well. The Vader match against Tamara was great as Vader tears the punk a new one and kisses him afterwards. I like Vader as a real person in UWF! than as the version we get in the states. A humanized Vader is a truly spooky thing.

- I watched a mountain of FMW and GAEA stuff from earlier this year (thanks Rob and St. Phil! Unless you too went to see ECW last night!). Attention all future bookmakers: to see how to set up a feud see how Chigusa Nagayo beats the crap out of Migumi Kudo and drags Kudo's mortal enemy, Shark Tsuchiya, into the fray of the FMW against GAEA feud, and thus set up the streetfight at the 5/5/96 FMW supershow. Chigusa is so good at getting angles over that I don't even speak Japanese and I still wanted her to kick Tsuchiya's Pogo-aping ass (speaking of phrases that didn't translate well..). Shark powerbombs Kudo and then challenge Chigusa and this leads to a massive GAEA/FMW women's riot through the audience, as Chigusa's tiny followers try to restrain Nagayo and, at the same time, take fabulous potshots at the FMW youngsters that are trying to restrain Tsuchiya. GAEA vs FMW is the most fun-filled feud in wrestling and Chigusa is great at pissing off the tough gals in FMW. The riot is MUST SEE TV! The exquisite KAORU wrestled Combat Toyota on the Phil tape and it is as choice as one would expect from the "now-that-I've-become-an-interesting-wrestler-I'll-retire" Combat Toyota and KAORU. KAORU is the double whammy because she is a world class wrestler and never lets up the I-hate-FMW mentality even after this great match when a handshake would be the order of the day. KAORU does her zillion suplex and moonsault variations and hung with the

butt-kicking aspects of Combat's arsenal and threw in some garbage spots of her own for good measure. Combat showed off her expanded mat attack and hit one of the more graceful dropkicks one would see from a person of her size. Combat should move to the US and work US pansy style women's wrestling if her body isn't holding up to back-drop-driver intensive Japanese style. It's a shame to show so much promise at the end of one's career and not get the props you deserve. The Megumi Kudo/Shark Tsuchiya Barb Wire Death Match surpasses the 5/5 Toyota/Kudo match in terms of violence per square foot, but Tsuchiya sucks as much as Pogo, her prototype, in the ring so this wasn't nearly as cool as the CT/MK match. The only really good part was when Kudo gives Shark the HORRIBLE back-drop driver from heck! I'm still feeling that! I can't believe Kudo's retiring next year, too. She rules.

- Also on the FMW tape that I got was the usual mixed bag one gets from the FMW men's department. The absolute dirt worst Ricky Fuji match I've ever seen (versus Nanjo) is on it and it would make crops fail. On a MUCH better note Hisakatsu Ooya wrestles Daisuke Ikeda from BattleArts. Ooya is the co-chairman of "Coolest Wrestlers in a Garbage Wrestling Organization" (Masato Tanaka co-chairs) because he pulled a good match out of a BattleArts wrestler. Ikeda is pretty intense, as most of those shootstyle types are, and does the usual shootstyle drill: kick, knee, go for an cross armbreaker, opponent gets to the ropes, stand up, kick, knee, go for a knee bar, etc. Ooya stops the madness by suplexing the FUCK out of him twice. Ooya is becoming a pro style mat fave of mine and he works the half-assed shootstyle that IS BattleArts better than any of them do and sells better than any of those Pancrase never-weres ever could, and does some of the most vicious, Benoit-esque suplexes on earth. The six man street fight between FMW and W*ING was pretty good, mostly because Masato Tanaka was a part of the proceedings to kick the intensity level up a bit, and it worked best when he and Kanemura were going at it in the audience as Tanaka can do any suplex and Kanemura can take any bump, the more painful the better I guess. Hayabusa and Tanaka get extra points for successful manipulation of a ladder in a barb wire match, and I freaked out for Tanaka's tope over barbed wire, which would have really sucked if he slipped in Matsunaga's pool of blood or something. Hayabusa went flying into the spidernet about four times which made his "agony of defeat" tantrum at the end seem that much more plausible. An added highlight that made me happy was the unfurling of the W*ING flag at the end that said: "Wrestling International New Generation; (And wrapped in barbed wire) KING OF DANGER." I immediately called the KING OF DANGER (Cliff) and told him that I had a skirt idea for him.

- I watched the <<>> WAR international Junior Tournament from last year and that was the fucking miracle tape. There was the obvious cool stuff (Jericho/Ultimo Dragon) but there were things I could not imagine on it: two Gedo matches that were great, SEAN WALTMAN doing stuff I've never seen him do (lucha moves, northern light suplexes, kicks nine times stiffer than his best day in the Whiff). The Gedo/Waltman was a mutual miracle match because it was twice as good as anything I've seen either of them in. Gedo in WAR is such a surly punk that when it works and he is in with a good worker, he can take it to another level. WCW should look at Waltman in this tournament, which included a good match against Negro "Out-in-the-First-Round-in-Japan" Casas, and bring him in as this version. Forget that he is a little guy- I mean HELL! he will tower over Misterio and Juventud- and just let him kick people's

asses like he does here. They can remove his WWF candyass image by letting him go wild like this in his first match in. The Ultimo Dragon vs Chris Jericho RULED THE WORLD! When Jericho gets to the point in WCW where he is using his whole arsenal he had better be the most over face in WCW or I will start doubting the intelligence of wrestling fans (that was a joke, I guess). This tournament is best that I currently own on tape. Every match is at the peak of every participants ability and I was shocked by how good the performances of some wrestlers that I didn't think much of before were.

Next week: All the stuff I said I would watch last week! Lucha! Lucha! Lucha! I swear! and I'll watch the AJW that has been hanging over my head for three weeks! (I need to get over the feeling that I would be cheating on Chigusa and the gals.)

NANIWA~!

- Dean Rasmussen,

"There's no place called heaven if we haven't al